

# **BIRDS IN JEOPARDY**

*The Imperiled and Extinct Birds of the United States and Canada,  
Including Hawaii and Puerto Rico*

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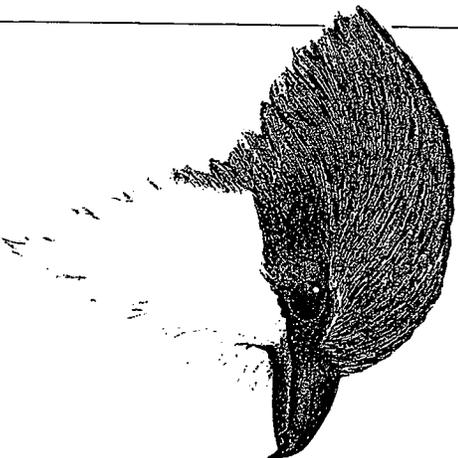
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## LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE

*Lanius ludovicianus*



I did not plan to write about this shrike. I have observed them in western Swiss Alps throughout the year. There is a resident breeding population in Swiss Alps.

Brendo

**NESTING:** Often in open fields with a few trees, or in open woodlands or scrub. The birds place their bulky, well-constructed cup of twigs, herbaceous plants, and bark strips in a shrub or a vine tangle.

**FOOD:** Mostly large insects (particularly in the West) and other land invertebrates, but also mice, birds, lizards, and carrion. It usually captures prey by sallying from a perch on a short flight, chasing (birds) in flight, or snatching prey from their perches. Lacking the talons of raptors, it stuns or kills flying birds with a blow from its powerful beak. It often stores prey by impaling it on barbed wire or a plant spine, hence its common name "butcher bird."

**RANGE:** Breeds over most of North America from central Canada south to southern Mexico. **WINTERS:** Throughout most of its breeding range, but retreats somewhat from Canada. **IN PERIL:** Possibly throughout its range, but especially in the Midwestern, New England, and Middle Atlantic states. It is one of the few birds showing significant declines in all continental regions included in the Breeding Bird Survey. Christmas Count records indicate that populations in the southeastern Atlantic coast states declined more than 20 percent between 1961 and 1978, and declines in the upper Midwest have been around 6 percent per year for more than two decades. **NOTES:** The Loggerhead Shrike nests earlier than most other passerines. Males and females defend separate territories during the nonbreeding season.

**JEOPARDIZED:** By habitat destruction and exposure to pesticides (particularly in the middle of its range) and possibly from impact with cars speeding on roads within nesting and hunting territories, but there is little agreement among biologists on the causes of the decline.

**LISTING:** Blue-listed 1972-86, and the subspecies found on San Clemente Island, California, was listed as **Endangered** in 1977 (see p. 55). By 1982 there were a few reports of migration and winter increases—a change in the pattern of very major breeding losses nearly everywhere else, and a report noting that more Peregrine Falcons than Loggerhead Shrikes were seen in 1981. The Breeding Bird Survey uncovered evidence of losses in all parts of the shrike's breeding range. By 1986 it was reported in decline or serious decline everywhere east of the Mississippi River and was qualified for Category 2 candidacy by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, targeting it for prompt study and evaluation for future listing. As of 1991, the subspecies of the Loggerhead Shrike occurring over most of the eastern U.S. continues to be recognized as a Category 2 candidate, according to the Service's listing priority system; thus the Service has information indicating the possible appropriateness of listing, but feels that further information is still needed. The Loggerhead Shrike was listed as **Threatened** in Canada in 1986, and eastern populations were listed as **Endangered** in Canada in 1991.

## BELL'S VIREO

*Vireo bellii*



## SNOWY PLOVER

*Charadrius alexandrinus*



**NESTING:** On beaches, dry mud or salt flats, or the sandy edges of rivers, lakes, or ponds. The nest is only a scrape, though the birds often place it within grass tufts or among bits of debris and twigs that conceal the eggs.

**FOOD:** Mostly insects, also aquatic invertebrates and small fish. While foraging, the Snowy Plover usually hunts visually, sometimes quivering its leg to stir up prey, running and picking items from the substrate, and probing beneath the surface of mud or sand (in or near shallow water).

**RANGE:** Widespread, reaching all but northern Asia, New Zealand, and Oceania.

**WINTERS** (North American populations): mostly from northwestern Mexico and the Bahamas south to Venezuela (in the east) and Chile (in the west). Part of the California population does not migrate.

**IN PERIL:** The species faces extirpation as a breeder on the U.S. west coast, and a recent survey of Gulf of Mexico beaches from Mississippi to Florida found fewer than 200 pairs.

**NOTES:** The Snowy Plover sometimes forms poorly defined colonies. Populations in the East produce one brood per year, but many pairs in the West produce two.

**JEOPARDIZED:** By the loss of suitable breeding habitat and by disturbance and destruction of nests on the remaining beach habitats.

**LISTING:** Blue-Listed 1972–82 and listed as of **Special Concern** in 1986. By 1982 there was confirmation that the Southern

Pacific Coast and Middle Pacific Coast regions were undergoing serious losses.

Losses on the Pacific Coast were verified by the Christmas Bird Count, which showed a 93-percent decline in central California and a 68-percent decline in southern California.

It was suggested that the condition of inland nesting habitat might account for local problems. By 1986, Special Concern was warranted, as declines were reported only from the Middle Pacific Coast Region, owing, perhaps, to insufficient coverage by observers in other parts of the species' range. Reports did not indicate major regional population declines in the Southeast, although declines were reported in parts of Florida and Ontario, and moderate to severe declines were reported in the Southern Great Plains Region. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service qualified the western subspecies, *Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*, and the southeastern subspecies, *C. a. tenuirostris*, as Category 2 (see p. 99) candidates. As of 1991, both the western and the southeastern subspecies continue to be recognized as Category 2 candidates, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's listing priority system; thus the Service has information indicating the possible appropriateness of listing, but feels that further information is still needed.

## LONG-BILLED CL

*Numenius americanus*

